

Shorter Note

Vegetative Reproduction Common in *Ophioglossum pycnostichum*. — The common southern adder's tongue, *Ophioglossum pycnostichum* (Fern.) Love & Love, is widely distributed throughout the moist woods of Southeastern United States. It is probably the most commonly noticed species of *Ophioglossum* because of its relatively large size (to 30 cm tall in my specimens) and so has been widely collected. *O. petiolatum* Hooker may reach a height of 20 cm or more but is uncommon. Despite the large number of *O. pycnostichum* specimens that have been collected, its growth habit is most often described as "plants growing singly" occasionally accompanied by a note such as "rarely spreading by means of proliferous buds on the roots." Though vegetative reproduction is rather common in *O. petiolatum*, *O. nudicaule* L. and *O. englemanni* Prantl, until now, we have only seen *O. pycnostichum* growing singly.

Here we report two separate and distinct Louisiana populations in which *O. pycnostichum* has been collected reproducing vegetatively by means of proliferous buds on the roots. In the first population, a specimen was collected that had two fully developed plants sharing a common root. On further investigation, these "doubles" were found to be quite common as well as "triples" (one plant that has vegetatively produced two distinct new plants). The most extraordinary find was a pair of large plants connected together that had given rise to eight additional plants between them (one individual made up a total of ten well developed plants). This population is approximately twelve meters long and three meters wide and is very densely populated. It is located in a semi-disturbed pine/hardwood forest on the east side of Bayou DeSiard ca 0.5 mile northeast of the intersection of US 165 and LA 134 north of Monroe, LA, 26 April 1993, *Cascio 126*, (NLU), 3 April, 1993, *Cascio 128–129* (NLU). The plants are growing in an area that is slightly depressed and remains moist longer than the area surrounding it.

A second population, approximately two miles from the first was then sampled. It was found to contain two "doubles" of only four plants examined. The plants in this population were few and scattered over an area approximately seven meters long and five meters wide. This population is located south of Keystone Road East of Sterlington, LA ca 1.7 miles west of the intersection of US 165 and LA 134, 4 April 1993, *Cascio 130*, (NLU). This is a mixed pine/hardwood forest prone to partial flooding.

The possibility of having observed a unique reproduction mechanism with so little effort and at such a rate seems unlikely. It is possible that the rarity of these types of collections is due more to collection method than rate of occurrence; however, specimens from more than these two populations would have to be more carefully examined for this habit before reaching such a conclusion. — DAVID KEITH CASCIO and R. DALE THOMAS, Department of Biology, Northeast Louisiana University, Monroe, LA 71209.

Referees for 1993

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